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[Redacted]

By email: [Redacted]

Our ref: EIR2025/03493  
14 March 2025

Dear [Redacted],

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Independent Water Commission and its supporting Defra Secretariat**

Thank you for your request for information of 17th February about Independent Water Commission and its supporting Defra Secretariat. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

*The Independent Water Commission was established in October 2024 to deliver recommendations to government on reforms to the water sector. It is chaired by Former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Jon Cunliffe. The Chair and advisory group are supported by a Defra Secretariat.*

*I would like to make the following requests about this secretariat:*

- The name, title, and grade of the senior civil servant leading this secretariat*
- The name, title, and grade of any other SCS working on the secretariat*
- The number of DEFRA staff (on a headcount basis) working on the secretariat, broken down by civil service grade*
- The number of DEFRA staff (on an FTE basis) working on the secretariat, broken down by civil service grade*

We enclose a copy of the information you requested:

As of 19 February 2025 the number of DEFRA staff (on a headcount and FTE basis) working on the secretariat, broken down by civil service grade:

Senior Civil Servants (SCS): 2

David Hallam (SCS2), Independent Water Commission SRO as part of Floods and Water Director role, 0.125 FTE

Amira Amzour (SCS1), Deputy Director for Water Industry Strategy, 0.8 FTE

Headcount: 39

FTE: 37 staff full time ranging from Grade 6 (Head of the Independent Water Commission Secretariat) to Higher Executive Officer (HEO) working on the secretariat full time 2 SCS staff

We have decided that a breakdown should be withheld under regulations 12(3) and 13(1) and (2A) of the EIRs as some of the numbers are less than 5 and therefore, the information constitutes personal data relating to persons other than you as it would or would likely be possible to identify these individuals if the information was released.

### **Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) and (2A)**

These sections exempt personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would breach any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We consider that disclosure of this information is likely to breach the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner. Disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data because the staff involved would not reasonably expect their identifiable information to be disclosed in relation to this request for information.

Information disclosed in response to this EIRs request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact us.

Yours sincerely

**Information Rights Team**  
[InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk)

## Annex A

### Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

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## Annex B

### Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to <sup>[Redacted]</sup> Head of Information Rights via email at [InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk) and they will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted using the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>